

BEWARE OF THE WAY OF LOT

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The following is an excerpt from the new Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies course *The Book of Genesis*:

The story of Abraham's nephew Lot is a sad tale that is recorded in Scripture as a warning to God's people in this day. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

LOT'S FIRST TASTE OF EGYPT

Lot got his first taste of the things of Egypt when Abraham backslided and journeyed to Egypt when there was famine in the land of Palestine in Genesis 12:10-20.

Abraham was out of God's will in this endeavor. He was not walking by faith but by sight. From this point on in the Bible, Egypt is a type of the world and going down into Egypt is a type of going out of God's will. See Isaiah 31:1.

Note the fruit of Abraham's backsliding:

1. He was out of fellowship with his loving God. The Bible says nothing about Abraham building an altar or calling on the Lord while he was in Egypt. His feet were walking in disobedience in Egypt and his heart was out of fellowship with his God.

2. Abraham lied about his wife (Gen. 12:11-13). This was the fruit of his unbelief. One sin leads to another. "It seems that Abraham was more concerned about his own safety than the safety of his wife--or the safety of the promised seed" (Wiersbe).

a. Saying that Sarah was his sister was a partial truth, as she was a half sister; but it was spoken with the intent to deceive, so it was a lie.

b. God preserved Sarah's honor in spite of Abraham's folly (Gen. 12:17).

3. Abraham lost his testimony before the unsaved. He was rebuked by the pagan king!

4. Abraham obtained an Egyptian member of his family. This was probably when Sarah obtained her Egyptian handmaid Hagar (Gen. 14:16; 16:1). "Of course, the suggestion

that she bear a child came from Sarah, but the presence of Hagar helped to bring about the carnal scheme. Whatever we bring with us from Egypt (the godless world) will ultimately cause us trouble” (Wiersbe). Thus we see that Abraham’s “little” backsliding episode has resulted in incalculable sin and animosity and trouble for mankind.

5. Abraham obtained riches in Egypt (Gen. 13:2). This is the first time the Bible says Abraham was “very rich.” These riches almost immediately became a source of strife between Abraham and Lot and resulted in Lot going to Sodom (Gen. 13:5-7). Whereas God’s blessing is not attended with sinful sorrow (Prov. 10:22), the riches of the world are attended with evil temptations and curses (1 Tim. 6:9).

6. Abraham’s journey to Egypt had a bad influence on Lot, who developed a taste for Egypt. “This young man developed a taste for Egypt (Gen. 13:10), and though Abraham took Lot out of Egypt, he could not take Egypt out of Lot!” (Wiersbe).

7. Abraham weakened himself in his resistance against sin. The second sin is much easier than the first, and Abraham sinned in this same manner later on (Gen. 20).

8. Abraham was a bad example to his son Isaac. Though Isaac was not yet born, he doubtless heard about this matter and it is certain that he later followed in his father’s footsteps (Gen. 26:6-11).

9. Abraham lost the fruit and reward that he could have had during this period of backsliding. The fruit of backsliding and living for the world is “wood, hay, and stubble” as contrasted with the “gold, silver, and precious stones” of a walk with God in holiness and separation (1 Cor. 3:12). Backsliding can be forgiven, but it always exacts a great price.

LOT’S DOWNWARD SLIDE

Lot began his downward spiritual slide in Genesis 13 when Abraham asked him to choose which way he would go. Backsliding doesn’t happen all at once; it happens in stages, as the individual makes unwise and carnal choices day by day, living carelessly according to the flesh rather than the Spirit.

Lot was a true believer who did not enjoy the wickedness of Sodom, but he was weak when he was left to his own choices (2 Pet. 2:7-8). When he was with Abraham he was strong but when he was left to make his own decisions, he was not wise and did not make godly decisions. This reminds us of the importance of godly fellowship and of faithful participation in a strong church. See 1 Cor. 15:33, which warns that evil communications corrupt good manners. This means that evil associations corrupt a good Christian way of life.

The downward slide described. He first “walked,” then “stood,” then “sat” (Ps. 1:1).

1. Lot looked toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10).
2. He journeyed toward Sodom (Gen. 13:11).
3. He pitched his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12).
4. He dwelt in Sodom (Gen. 14:12).
5. He sat in the gate of Sodom, holding a position of authority (Gen. 19:1).
6. He called the wicked men of Sodom “brethren” (Gen. 19:7).

“Lot followed the path of friendship with the world (Jam. 4:4), then love of the world (1 Jn. 2:15-16), then conformity to the world (Rom. 12:2), and finally, judgment with the world (1 Cor. 11:32)” (Wiersbe).

Lot erred by following the lust of his eyes (Gen. 13:10). Lot should have judged on the basis of spiritual judgment and looked at things through God’s eyes and fled from Sodom because of its wickedness (Gen. 13:13), but instead he judged on the basis of his carnal nature. There is no indication that he prayed about the matter or sought godly counsel. He simply followed his own desires.

The beauty of Sodom and Gomorrah should have caused men to glorify God the Creator (Gen. 13:10), but instead they worshipped the creature more than the Creator and were given over to unnatural lusts. It is the same today. Some of the most beautiful places on the earth are the scenes of the grossest idolatry and debauchery.

LOT’S SAD END (Genesis 19)

Here we see the bitter end of Lot’s years of backsliding and carnality. Lot did not get to this sad place overnight. The path that led to this scene in Genesis 19 began years before when Lot first cast his eyes toward Sodom.

LESSONS FROM LOT:

1. What he retained. There will always be some evidence of one’s salvation, even in a backslider like Lot.
 - a. He still retained his hospitable nature (Gen. 19:1-3). His attitude toward the messengers of God was completely different from that of his unsaved neighbors.

- b. He still retained his faith in God's Word (Gen. 19:12-14). When the angels told Lot that God was going to destroy Sodom, he believed them and tried to convince his married children to flee with him.
 - c. He still retained his disgust toward sin (2 Pet. 2:8). Though he was disgusted with the sin of Sodom, he wasn't disgusted enough to separate from it!
2. What he lost. See the solemn warning of 1 Cor. 15:33, which Lot ignored.
- a. He lost his morality (Gen. 19:8). To walk in the flesh means to be overcome by the flesh. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16-17).
 - b. He lost his testimony before his family (Gen. 19:14). When he tried to warn his daughters and their pagan sons in laws, they mocked him. They had no respect for his spiritual walk because he had lived so hypocritically before them. They did not fear Lot's God because he had not walked in the fear of God before them.
 - c. He lost his ability to say yes to the will of God (Gen. 19:16). In spite of the great urgency of the angels, Lot still lingered, undecided, unable simply to obey.
 - d. He lost his willingness to sacrifice for the will of God (Gen. 19:18-20). He had become addicted to the comforts of the wicked cities. "Zoar was spared, to gratify him. Though his intercession for it was not, as Abraham's for Sodom, from a principle of generous charity, but merely from self-interest, yet God granted him his request, to show how much the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails" (Matthew Henry).
 - e. He lost his wealth and position. "He that, awhile ago, could not find room enough for himself and his stock in the whole land, but must jostle with Abraham, and get as far from him as he could, is now confined to a hole in a hill, where he has scarcely room to turn himself, and there he is solitary and trembling. Note, It is just with God to reduce those to poverty and restraint who have abused their liberty and plenty. See also in Lot what those bring themselves to, at last, that forsake the communion of saints for secular advantages; they will be beaten with their own rod" (Matthew Henry).

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE OF SODOM

1. They were given over to homosexuality (Gen. 19:4-5). The entire populace had become morally corrupt and given over to unnatural lust. This is a warning about the

corrupting influence of homosexuality. There were not even 10 righteous in the entire city (Gen. 18:32). Lot offered them his unmarried daughters, but they wanted the men. Jude 7 says their sin was “giving themselves over to fornication, and going about strange flesh.”

2. They were proud and open about their sin (Is. 3:9). The men of Sodom were “out of the closet” and were “gay and proud.”

3. They were violent (Gen. 19:9). Violence goes hand in hand with certain sins such as adultery, homosexuality, drug abuse, and drunkenness.

4. They were driven to unreasonable extremes in their lust (Gen. 19:11). “And after every one of them was stricken blind, they groped for the door still to commit that sin. If you want a picture of the persistence of an evil passion, when the heart is hard and the neck stiffened, when the soul is incorrigible and obdurate, take the picture of these people, blinded by the judgment of God and yet groping for the door” (B.H. Carroll).

5. They were judged by God (v. 24). According to the description given in Scripture, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah was a supernatural rather than a natural event. Beware of commentators who try to explain Bible miracles on the basis of natural events.

6. They are an example to all generations of God’s holy zeal against sin (2 Pet. 2:6). The Bible teaches us that God is love, but God is also holy and righteous and punishes sin if it is not repented of and forsaken.

7. They are a warning of eternal hell fire (Jude 7). Though Sodom was burned up, the sinners in Sodom are still in torment in hell. Jesus described this in Mark 9:43-48.

8. The place of Sodom’s destruction is probably covered today by the Dead Sea (rightly named!). It is also called the Salt Sea (Num. 34:12). The Greeks called it *Asphaltites* Sea, because of the bitumen or pitch or asphalt that rises from the bottom.

LESSONS FROM LOT’S WIFE (Gen. 19:26)

1. She had raised her children for the world rather than for God. The fact that Lot’s children cared nothing for the things of God is a testimony to their parent’s misplaced focus in life. Contrast Prov. 22:6.

2. She had given her heart to Sodom and could not turn away from it (Gen. 19:26). Compare Lk. 12:34-36.

3. She became a pillar of salt. Unbelievers doubt this miracle, but Jesus affirmed it (Lk. 17:32). It was no more difficult for God to turn Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt than it was

for Him to destroy Sodom with fire and brimstone. Those who believe in the God of the Bible have no difficulty believing in the miracles of the Bible.

4. She is the picture of those who begin on the Gospel road but who turn back to the world (Heb. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:20-22). Those who are truly saved do not turn back (John 6:66-69; Heb. 10:38-39).

LESSONS FROM LOT'S DAUGHTERS (Gen. 19:30-38)

1. They had learned their morality from the world. The very fact that they conceived of committing such an unnatural sin demonstrates the moral perversion of their education in Sodom. Wise parents will not allow their children to mingle with the wicked so they will not learn the ways of the wicked. This is why godly parents must be so careful about where their children are educated and who their friends are and what they watch and read.

2. They had no respect for their father. It did not matter to these girls that they were going to make their father drunken and lead him into unspeakable immorality. It did not matter to these girls that their actions would bring great reproach upon their father. Of course, it is also true that their father had shown no respect for his daughters (Gen. 19:8).

3. They knew the power of alcoholic wine. Here is another lesson they had learned in Sodom. Wine has the power to quench moral inhibitions. Compare Prov. 23:33. The person who drinks liquor and gets drunk and commits sins and crimes cannot protest that the liquor did it. Had he not taken the liquor to his lips, none of these things would have happened (Prov. 20:1).

4. Their children hated God and His people and were devoted to wickedness (Gen. 19:37-38). The Moabites and Ammonites were united in their hatred of Israel (Deut. 23:3-4). The Moabites were given over to fornication and idolatry (Num. 21:29; 25:1-3).

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